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RUSSIA'S POWER

OF

Attacking India.

BY

CHARLES MARVIN,

AUTHOR OF

"THE REGION OF THE ETERNAL FIRE," "RECONNOITRING CENTRAL ASIA,"
"THE RUSSIAN ADVANCE TOWARDS INDIA," "THE RAILWAY RACE TO HERAT,"
"SHALL RUSSIA HAVE PENJDEH?" "THE RUSSIANS AT MERV AND HERAT,"
"MERV, THE QUEEN OF THE WORLD," "THE PETROLEUM INDUSTRY OF SOUTHERN
RUSSIA," "BAKU THE PETROLIA OF EUROPE," "THE RUSSIAN ANNEXATION
OF MERV," "THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE TURCOMANS,"
"RUSSIA'S POWER OF SEIZING HERAT," "OUR PUBLIC OFFICES," ETC.

Tenth Thousand.

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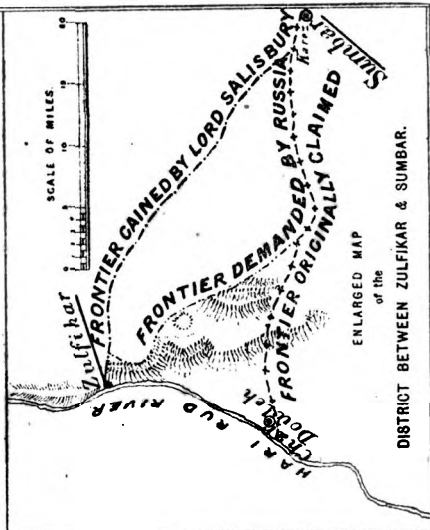
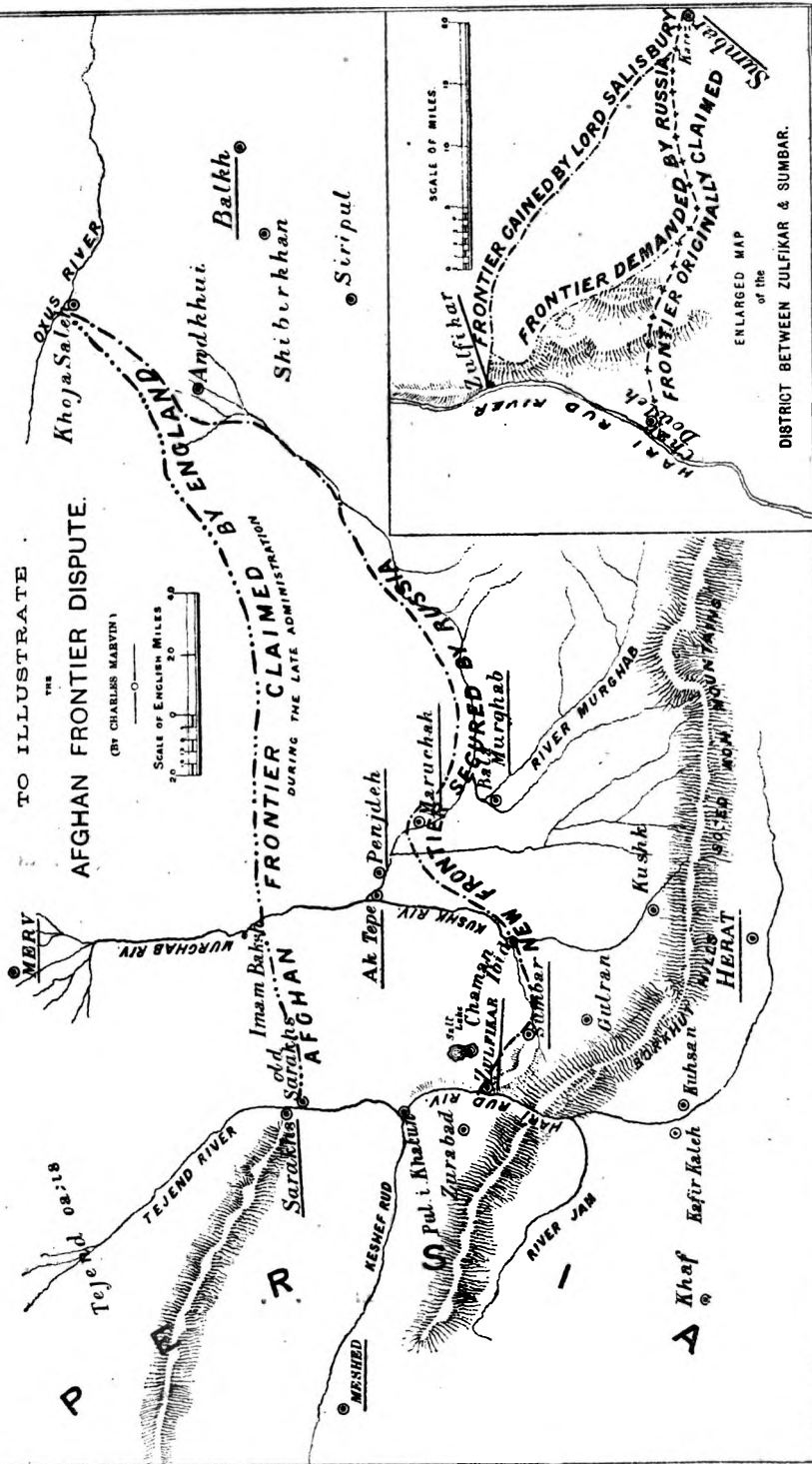
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MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE AFGHAN FRONTIER DISPUTE.

(BY CHARLES MARVIN)



P R E F A C E .

IN the spring of this year I wrote these words in *The Russians at the Gates of Herat* : " Let me make the appeal that, if you thoroughly appreciate the importance of preserving Herat, you will not simply content yourself with silent acquiescence. The press and the platform are open to you to give publicity to your support, and if you have means you can help in the dissemination of pamphlets to keep alive public feeling to the danger of the Russian advance. I have never rejected anyone's co-operation in the sacred task of safeguarding India from the menace from the north, and gratefully place on record the encouragement which has been given to my efforts by the sympathy conveyed to me by my readers. With your help I may be able to do more than I am doing ; without it, I remain just as determined as ever not to allow Russia to have Herat while my tongue and my pen can prevent it."

In response to this appeal, I have been asked by some patriotic persons to issue a cheap popular pamphlet specially intended to bring home the leading facts of the Russian advance to the masses. Neither on the part of those patriotic persons, nor on my own, has any thought of profit been entertained with regard to this issue, and, therefore, both they and the writer will be glad of the co-operation of others to diffuse the facts contained

in it, if those facts be deemed, on examination, worthy of further diffusion. I have no desire to provoke popular feeling against Russia, or to incite this country to Jingoistic enterprises. I simply make known what appears to me the real danger of the Russian advance, and the proposals eminent English generals have made to ward it off. If India is worth keeping, it is worth guarding. To guard India effectually is, to my view, the greatest of English interests to-day, and it is the duty of every Englishman to see that the guardianship of so Imperial an interest is not placed in negligent, indifferent, or incapable hands.

Grosvenor House,
Plumstead Common, Kent.
December 31, 1885.



RUSSIA'S POWER OF ATTACKING INDIA.

Three Things needful for England to know.

ALTHOUGH a treaty has been at last amicably arranged with Russia, fixing the north-west frontier of Afghanistan, from Zul-fikar to the river Oxus, Lessar himself admits that the line we have drawn with Russia is only a temporary one. In other words, he declares, and other eminent Russians, such as Colonel Veniukoff, &c., share his opinion, that before long Russia will make a fresh advance towards India. Since, therefore, Russia does not hide her intention to interfere afresh with our interests in the East, it is the duty of every Englishman, proud of his country and anxious for her welfare, to make himself clearly acquainted with the nature of her designs. As I shall directly show, the prosperity of England is bound up with the maintenance of her power in India. Thanks to England being an island, there is no fear of the Cossack setting his foot on our shores; but if the Cossack sets his foot in India his *shadow* will darken this land, and distress and starvation will make as much havoc among the masses as if he were himself present with his ruthless sabre and spear.

Three things are needful for England to know. 1. What Russia's designs really are. 2. What sort of barrier Afghanistan actually is. 3. How largely her trade prosperity is dependent on the retention of India. In dealing with these, each in succession, the smallness of the space at my disposal will pre-

vent exhaustive treatment. I can only give the essence of what has been written and said in England and Russia on the subject, but, as the reader doubtless shares my detestation of Party quackery, national hatreds, the croaking of alarmists, and the crotchets of old fogies, whether military or political, he will be content, I hope, to trust my impartiality, and, at any rate, not impute to me bias against any state, party, or individual.

No more Desert between Russia and India.

Russia is essentially a military power, and the character of her autocratic institutions give a foremost place to military glory. The maintenance of her immense army, consisting always of nearly 900,000 troops, and in time of war of more than 3,000,000, causes an outlay which yearly becomes heavier to bear, and which her Government seeks to ease by acquiring fresh territory. In the past many of her conquests have been barren, owing to the desert character of the country acquired, but these losses are now at an end. Russia to-day stands on the threshold of the richest provinces of Turkey, Persia, and Afghanistan—not a scrap of desert intervenes between her outposts and our own; and thus when England is told by ignorant politicians, that Russia is simply impoverishing herself by annexing sandy deserts and rascally nomads, she must reply that those ignoramuses are chattering of the past, and that in the opinion of Russian statesmen, only profitable annexations now lie before Russia. Profitable, in the sense that they will repay Russia out of the resources they contain, and, by the political and military power they confer, give her the means of recouping herself for the sacrifices of the past and the burdens of the present. Let me quote two instances to show what I mean. The conquest of the Turcoman country near Krasnovodsk cost Russia very little money, and in return for her trouble she has secured, in one small district alone, petroleum and ozokerit deposits worth £35,000,000 sterling. That was what English politicians at the time called a “barren annexation.” Again, by the crushing

conquest of the insignificant Turcoman stronghold of Geok Tepé Russia frightened into submission Merv and all the country which she now holds up to the Afghan frontier. And if this submission and annexation so shook the security of India that England had to assign £10,000,000 to strengthen the frontier, and send 10,000 more British troops to permanently man it, may I ask you whether, from a Russian point of view, that insignificant Turcoman fortress of Geok Tepé—unknown before 1879—was not worth the outlay involved in conquering it?

What Russia thinks the Annexation of Herat will do.

Now, if Russia advances again to Herat, and Lessar tells us her present frontier is only a halting-place, she not only secures a country famous throughout Asia for its corn and fruit, and the amazing wealth of its mineral resources, thus repaying herself for her conquest, but she also obtains a position enabling her to perpetually threaten the security of our rule in India. In short, if we let her take up the position in Afghanistan she aims at, she will be able, according to the opinion of General Soboleff, one of the principal members of the war party in Russia, to make her choice of four things:—(1) To conquer and found a Russo-Indian empire; (2) To expel England and found a series of vassal Indian States; (3) To establish a free India under Russian protection; (4) To compel England to be always Russia's ally, under the threat of making war upon India and bleeding her by a heavy war indemnity. The last course appears to him, for the moment, the easiest to pursue, and it is well we should examine the real character of the aim and the means Russia possesses of attaining it.

*Russia's Road to India unassailable; England's
Road vulnerable all the way.*

Disposed about Russia are nearly 900,000 troops, always under arms. The centre of Russia's strength is Moscow. The

highway of her trade is the river Volga, draining, with its branches, her most populous districts in its course to the Caspian Sea. The railway system touches the Volga at seven different points; on the river are thousands of barges and hundreds of steamers (some carrying 2,000 passengers at a time); any amount of food can be cheaply purchased on its banks; and English and Russian officers agree that Russia could transport to the Caspian Sea an army of 250,000 men (if she wanted so many) with their supplies, and mass them on the coast for an expedition to India. She could do this, mind, without our being able to fire a single shot at them. On the other hand, we can never send a single soldier from England without having to protect the transports with men-of-war against the enemy. Russia has not a large fleet to-day, but some day she might have Germany or France as an ally, for recent events in New Guinea and Madagascar have shown us that we must be prepared against other foes as well as Russia. Moreover, if Russia be allowed to get Constantinople, she can mature in the Black Sea a great fleet which we cannot attack until it emerges—perhaps with treacherous suddenness—to strike our vessels going through the Mediterranean to India. Now let us never forget this fact—we can never render our sea-road to India free from attack, and will always be in this respect weak, while Russia can not only to-day assemble a great army in the Caspian, where we cannot hit her, but also, if we ever yield Constantinople, will be able to mass land and sea forces in the Black Sea to attack that sea-road as it passes through the Suez Canal. Our task is a double one. We have got to defend the road to India as well as India itself, while Russia, from Moscow to the moment she comes in contact with us in Afghanistan, has nothing to defend. Hence, for the security of that sea-road, we must have a strong fleet, keep foreign powers out of Egypt, and Russia out of Constantinople; and, for the defence of India on the land side, we must hold the strongest possible position we can acquire in Afghanistan.

The Army we can put on the Frontier.

Russia can indisputably mass an army of 100,000 to 250,000 troops in the Caspian.* Those troops will be all Russians, without a single unreliable sepoy among them. In India we maintain 75,000 British troops and 125,000 natives; or, in all, 200,000 to keep in order the 250,000,000 subjects of Empress Victoria. Russian generals argue that the popular ferment which a war would provoke among the natives would prevent our placing more than half our British troops on the Afghan frontier, and some English generals declare it would be dangerous to put more sepoys than British troops in front of the Russians. In other words, they think 37,500 British and 37,500 native troops, or 75,000 in all, would be the greatest force we could face Russia with. But let us, for sake of argument, raise this to 50,000 British troops and 50,000 natives, or in all 100,000 men. Against these Russia would hurl her Caspian army of 100,000 to 250,000 Russian soldiers, and she thinks her superior numbers would enable her to beat us. Her generals put the matter thus: "You have 75,000 British troops to keep down 250,000,000 natives, some of whom must hate you. We declare war. Admit that you put every British soldier on the Afghan frontier. If we can only get our Caspian army placed alongside you, your force of 75,000 British troops will stand between 100,000 to 250,000 Russians and the 250,000,000 more or less neutral or disaffected people of India. You are brave, but our superior numbers would enable us to break through your 75,000 troops and march on to India."

The Russian Railway to Afghanistan.

Such a result rests on the assumption that Russia would be able to mass her Caspian army alongside our own. Her outposts are pretty close already, being within 549 miles of our

* A full account of Russia's means of doing this is given in *The Russians at the Gates of Herat*, by the Author.

own, and the country between is so easy to traverse that the Cossacks could drive a cart the whole distance. In 1877 the Russians had to march from 750 to 970 miles to get to Constantinople, crossing, moreover, the Danube, the second largest river in Europe, and the almost impregnable Balkan range. There is no such river, and no such range between the Cossack and the Sepoy; and if England is living in a fool's paradise and fancies 549 miles hard to traverse, Russia is not. From the Caspian Russia has finished her railway to Askabad, and intends extending it thence to Penjdeh, whence the distance to our outposts is merely 549 miles. She is also completing a railway to Petrovsk, on the Caspian; and when this is finished next year, and the Askabad-Penjdeh line also, *there will be direct railway communication, broken only by the Caspian ferry, from Moscow and all the chief towns of Russia to within 100 miles of Herat and 549 miles of our Quetta soldiers.* Yet England, who has just been sending soldiers 1,500 miles from Cairo to Khartoum, fancies the 549 miles of the Afghan barrier broad enough to arrest the Cossack!

No Afghan Barrier at all.

But the Russians, it is said, would have to fight their way through Afghan hordes to get at our soldiers. "Look how they fought us in the last war, picking off our troops in their mountain passes, and slashing them to mince-meat on the plain." Gammon, sheer gammon! The country we fought in, and the fierce Afghan tribes, lie hundreds of miles away from the road the Russians would march over. We certainly fought on that road the Herat levies at Maiwand, and got licked; but the ease with which Roberts defeated them showed that General Burrows could have done the same if he had not been rusty from having passed most of his life at the desk. But when English politicians talk of the Afghans, they refer not to those Roberts beat so easily at Candahar, but to the tribes that harassed him in the Cabul campaign and the masses that besieged him at Sherpur—

300 miles to the north of Maiwand and 600 from Herat. Between the Cossacks and our soldiers there are only two towns—Herat and Candahar—each with about 50,000 inhabitants, and just a thin scattering of tribesmen here and there, located in settlements offering no defence against Russia. There are no mountains, no passes, no swarms of Afghan tribes in this part of the Afghan barrier. All exist in the Cabul part, 300 miles to the north; but Russia does not propose to march through Cabul, so they are of no use to us. Let me put the matter still more plainly. If Russia, say, proposed marching an army by the direct road from London to York, and English politicians told her she would have to traverse the mountains of Wales and fight the Welshmen on the way, you would call those politicians fools. Yet English politicians are almost daily saying the same thing with regard to the marching of a Russian army through Afghanistan.

*Russia wants not the Town of Herat, but the Great
Camping Ground of Herat.*

In 1878, when we prevented Russia occupying Constantinople, she was too far off in Central Asia to do much harm to India, and we could laugh at her threats. To-day she stands within 100 miles of the Key of India, and every hour her position is improving. But she is not satisfied. She wants Herat. Not the town simply, mind, but the whole district of Herat, as far as the river Helmund, within 70 miles of Candahar, and 150 of our Quetta outposts. If you will put yourself in Russia's position and try to realise what she aims at, you will appreciate why Herat is called the Key of India by Skobelev, Lord Napier, Roberts, and other great soldiers. If Russia went to war to-morrow, she would have to begin the campaign from the Caspian, with the bulk of her army more than 1,000 miles from our outposts; because, although she could easily mass 100,000 to 250,000 troops in the Caspian, there is no good place to camp so large a force all the way to

Herat. She might, with a deal of inconvenience, pack 60,000 at Askabad, Sarakhs, and Merv, but she would have to feed them from the Caspian, as those localities are poor in supplies. But give her the Herat district, and the conditions change in a moment. Herat can feed 150,000 troops even in its present ill-developed condition, and we may be sure Russia would very soon make it feed a quarter of a million. If, therefore, Russia annexed the Herat district, and put it in order, she could commence a war against us with that Caspian army of 100,000 to 250,000 troops already settled down in it, within 150 miles of our present position. Now you will see why Russia wants Herat. Without it, she must begin war with her army stowed in the Caspian, more than 1,000 miles from our troops; with it, she can begin with that army assembled within 150 miles of it. This, our generals hold, is far too close to be safe, and they have urged in print, and appealed to me to urge upon you to never let the Russians annex Herat. If you are indifferent, and let Russia take it, you will have to immensely increase your Indian army, and even then India will always be unsafe.

What Russia would do with Herat.

It must never be forgotten that if Russia secured Herat, a few years would suffice to render it very different from what it is to-day. Already the railway is well on its way thither, and in a very short time it could be pushed on, through Herat, to the nearest Russian point to India. The state of affairs would then be this. The army of Russia at home, 3,000,000 strong in time of war, would be connected by railway with the army of 100,000 to 250,000 troops camped within 70 miles or so of Candahar, and 150 of our Quetta outposts. From the Caspian, which is Russia's great base, that railway would carry troops to the front, to fight your Quetta troops, *in forty-eight hours*. Now, using the swiftest steamers, England could not send reinforcements to Quetta *in less than a month*, and if Russia treacherously

blocked the Suez Canal, six or seven weeks might be needed.* Russia would, therefore, possess an enormous advantage over ourselves. And anybody who knows Russia can tell how she would use it. For instance, Russia makes an attempt to seize Constantinople, Corea, or somewhere else, leading to a warlike feeling between the two countries. The diplomatists wrangle for weeks, and Liberals and Conservatives quarrel as to whether Russia means war or not. In the meanwhile Russia masses her troops in the Caspian region, and, having all the telegraphs in her hands, only vague rumours reach England. Suddenly, one fine morning, a Russian vessel accidentally sinks, blocking the Suez Canal, and a telegram arrives three days later from Quetta, announcing that the Russians have crossed the frontier, and are already in sight of Candahar. Always unready, England simply has her ordinary garrison at Quetta, while Russia's army in the Herat camping-ground is marching on, 200,000 strong, to attack it. A fortnight or so suffices for the whole campaign, and before even reinforcements get half-way from England, our forces on the frontier are overwhelmed by superior numbers, and India lies open to the invader.

*The Seizure of Herat means the Russians within
Seventy Miles of Candahar.*

Now this is no alarmist picture, but simply a rough sketch of what your ablest generals say will be likely to occur if England lets Russia occupy the great camping-ground of Herat. People sometimes lightly say—"Oh, if Russia takes Herat we shall take Candahar," and think the matter settled; but it is not so. The occupation of Candahar would be absolutely necessary, both Roberts and Wolseley agree, if Russia took Herat, but it would not remedy the enormous evil of allowing Russia

* It may be remembered that during the Penjeh scare, two Russian vessels kept hovering about the Canal. Had war been certain they would have been sunk to block it. Last summer the mere accidental sinking of a dredger blocked the Canal three weeks.

to have a splendid camping-ground 100 miles or so from our troops instead of 1,000. Remember, Russia has always been a treacherous foe. She waits and watches until she can suddenly smash her unsuspecting enemy with a crushing blow. If we keep her out of Herat, we keep her main army a thousand miles from Candahar; if we let her have Herat, we give her the means of massing her main army so close, that its Helmund pickets will be only seventy miles off. I think, therefore, that as we have told Russia we shall not let her touch Herat without having to fight for it, it would be wiser to stick to our word. Never forget, that an English occupation of Candahar is only a poor set-off against a Russian occupation of Herat.

Old Fogey Views of Afghanistan.

"But Herat is so far off; better wait where we are, and knock the Russians, exhausted by their journey, on the head as they attempt to crawl through the passes into India. The further the Russians have to come the weaker they will be, and we shall easily overcome them." When you hear a politician uttering such words as these, you may make up your mind he is either an ignoramus, or else an old fogey of a Rip van Winkle who has been asleep the last ten years. Ten years ago people believed that there were only three passes in the Sulie-man range: the Bolan and the Khyber, through which we had marched into Afghanistan in 1839, and the Gomal Pass midway between them, through which Napoleon I. had once talked of marching with the Russians into India. Now, if you look on the land side of India, the river Indus runs from the Himalaya chain direct to the sea alongside this Sulieman range. People, therefore, said, if we keep on the Indian side of the Indus river, we can let the Afghan tribes hold the three cracks in the Sulie-man range, and if the Russians force their way through those cracks we can attack them as they try to cross the river. This was very pretty in those olden times, and some Rip van Winkles think it pretty still. But what has taken place in the interval?

It has been found that instead of there being only 8 passes in the Sulieman range there are 300! And not only are many of those three hundred better than the Khyber and the Bolan, but all are easier to traverse than the passes in the Balkans which the Russians forced in 1877. Now, if the well-drilled and well-armed Turks could not permanently hold a few passes in the Balkans, could we expect the badly-armed and badly-led tribes to hold three hundred? Moreover, many of those passes traverse country where there are no people at all, or only a few hundred. So that, in consequence of the discovery of there being *three hundred* instead of *three* passes in the Sulieman range, that range has ceased to be regarded as a tribal barrier at all. It is not even a barrier that we ourselves could man and hold.

What is the Use of Candahar?

And now you will see the value of Candahar. Supposing an army of 100,000 Russian troops was marching upon India from Sarakhs and Herat, which do you think would be the best course to adopt—to divide the English army of 100,000 troops (I use the number for example) into 300 parts, and let the *whole* Russian army attack any *one* of those 300 parts in the passes, where the Russians would of course be 300 to 1, or mass the 100,000 English troops in some spot in *front* of the passes, where they could arrest and fight the 100,000 Russians on equal terms? Obviously the latter would be the better plan, the more so, because side by side with those 300 passes are hundreds of mountain paths and sheep tracks, enabling the Russian force, 300 to 1, to slip some of its men round to the rear of our weak detachments, and capture the passes held. Well, Wolseley and Roberts, England's two foremost generals, to quote no others, are agreed that we must never let Russia get to those passes, but fight her in the open before she reaches them—in other words, we must fight her at Candahar.

“Whenever the Russians march on Herat, we must certainly

occupy Candahar, unless we intend to give up India, or allow it to be taken from us."—LORD WOLSELEY, 1880.

If you fail to stop Russia at Candahar, you will never stop her in the Sulieman range, and when she emerges from the passes she can mass her whole force in two or three places on the river, where the English would have to be thinly stretched along a distance of a thousand miles to oppose the crossing. Thus she could break her way across at some point as easily as she did the Danube in 1877. The leading English statesmen, of both parties, are quite aware of this, and agree with Wolseley and Roberts that the Sulieman range and the Indus river constitute no effective barrier to Russia. Mr. Gladstone commenced operations, and Lord Salisbury has continued them, for marching from Quetta into Candahar the moment the Russians make a move upon Herat.

Has England really lost Herat?

But there is one thing English statesmen do not recognise so clearly, and that is the relative ease with which Herat can be saved. "Herat is so far off," one often hears said. Is it? Let us see. The occupation of the Candahar district would bring our outposts within 300 miles of Herat—at present they are distant 449. But it is forgotten that all Beluchistan is British territory, and that from the north-west corner, in the Seistan part of the Helmund river, the distance is only 200 miles from Herat. Now, are either of these three distances, 300 miles, 449 miles, and 200 miles, very far for a nation that has just been sending soldiers 1,500 miles from Cairo to Khartoum, that has established railway communication right across India from Calcutta to Quetta, 2,500 miles, and built in a few years a railway right across Canada, 3,000 miles, to the Pacific? In a few months the Indian railways will be within 449 miles of Herat, and yet there are politicians who speak of Herat as being too far off to save! Mere mannikins, who think a 'bus ride to the Bank a journey, may consider it too far off, but, bearing in

mind the enormous importance of Herat, none of our colonists, used to big distances, would think so, while a Russian, who has to travel 404 miles to get from St. Petersburg to Moscow alone, would call it a trifle. Surely we English are not more degenerate than our Colonists or the Russians!

Should Herat be India's Metz?

A good deal of misconception prevails about Herat, because English people do not clearly understand what our Indian generals want, and what they do not want. Candahar we must make a Metz of, if Russia continues her aggression. There is no difference of opinion about *that* among soldiers and statesmen whose opinion is worth listening to, but confusion is occasioned because people run away with the idea that our Indian generals want to make a Metz of Herat. This idea has been so banged at by the Lyttonites and the Riponites that there is a danger that, amidst their rival clamour, the British public may allow the power of safeguarding Herat to slip from England's hands. For my part, I do not care a rap for the rival policies of Lytton or Ripon, but I do care that our Indian generals should have the best possible frontier to defend. "If England lets the Russians come too close to India," said an Indian officer to me some time ago, "she will have to choose between conscription and giving up India." "Conscription," I answered, "England will never tolerate, and, knowing what I do personally of conscription in Russia, I should be the first to oppose it; but it is only rational that, as we shall never be able to give you a large army, we should give you a strong defensive position to make up for it." Such a position is Candahar, converted into an Indian Metz, and Herat as a strong outpost, with the new Russo-Afghan frontier supervised by English officers, to keep the Russians in order. I do not advocate, and our generals in India do not advocate, putting all our eggs into the Herat basket. England's interests will be amply provided for, if the Herat district be kept out of Russia's hands and free from her

influence. A fundamental principle of Indian Defence is, that a war should never commence with Herat *already* in Russia's possession. Why, I have already explained. If it be kept out of Russia's hands *until* war breaks out, the Russians, however quickly they may push on their Penjdeh, Sarakhs, and Merv troops to Herat and India, masking very probably Herat, and rushing ahead to the Helmund, must, nevertheless, keep the *bulk* of their army in the Caspian, 1,000 miles from us, because of the absence of a great camping-ground. If we do not keep it out of Russia's hands, Herat will become a Sevastopol tied to Moscow by a broad-gauge railway, and the war will begin with 200,000 troops already within a few marches of Candahar. Thus it is an immense gain to India for Herat to be even as it is, notwithstanding the weakness of the Afghans, and our immediate object should be, not so much to place a garrison in it, as to establish an Anglo-Afghan cordon along the new frontier, which would have the effect of preventing further Russian encroachments in time of peace. From Beluchistan to Zulfikar, and thence to the Oxus, a few thousand Afghan soldiers and tribal levies, supervised, every picket, by a British or Indian officer, would be ample for this purpose, and Herat would be safeguarded in time of peace without injury to the pride of the Ameer or justifiable cause of resentment to Russia.

England herself must look after the New Frontier.

In 1854 we "drifted" into war with Russia, and I am afraid we have drifted into more than one since, from indecision, ignorance, and indifference. It is essential, therefore, if the new frontier is to be respected by Russia, that English statesmen of both parties should give Russia clearly to understand that we shall never let her annex Herat; and that if she attempts to take it we shall fight her until she suspends the enterprise. There is no Jingoism in this. What I want to prevent is Russia and England drifting into war. Russia attaches enormous importance to Herat, and if we seem at all indifferent, or, out of

laziness, stupidly tell her we do not think we can save it, the chances are that she may be tempted into seizing the place, trusting to our "squeezability" to yield to accomplished events. But our generals are so convinced of the necessity of preserving Herat for India, that such a gross attack would almost inevitably end in war. Therefore, to prevent war, Russia should be clearly given to understand she must never infringe the new frontier; and this, at least, will always make Russian statesmen think twice before attempting it. The Herat district is naturally so orderly, compared with the rest of Afghanistan, and there are so few tribesmen living near the new frontier, that there is no fear of the Afghans provoking the Russians into attack. What we have to guard against is a repetition of the Penjdeh incident. This we can only do by placing the frontier pickets under the charge of British officers. The Afghan troops and officials are quite willing that this should be the case. All that is really necessary is to secure the Ameer's consent, which would not be difficult, and send the officers to the spot. I have discussed the matter with officers attached to Sir Peter Lumsden's mission, and they all agree there would be no difficulty in putting the new frontier under the control of our countrymen.

Russia's Design upon all the Land Routes connecting Asia with Europe.

The annexation of Herat would not only provide Russia with a great camping-ground for a quarter of a million troops close to Candahar, but also enable her, by shoving her way a few hundred miles south across open country, populated by a few thousand tribesmen, to reach the Persian Gulf, and establish a naval station, distant *only a few days' sail from Bombay and the Suez Canal Route*. This could be done in one stride, because there is absolutely no barrier the whole way from Herat to the sea. But there are politicians who say "Russia wants outlets to the sea. Let her move down to the Persian Gulf." But what do these sentimentalists overlook who thus advise a nation of

shopkeepers? If Russia be allowed to move down to the Persian Gulf, *all the roads between Asia and Europe pass into the hands of the most merciless foe to British commerce and Free Trade in the World.* If you look at the map you will see that, by so doing, Russia splits Europe and Asia in halves, and makes herself autocrat of the commerce passing by land between the two continents. What a grand trade conquest! Yet England is being constantly told by certain bats of politicians that Russia's conquests are *only* political, and are fraught with no harm to British trade.

English Rule in India a Miracle.

Up to now England has been extraordinarily lucky in having no strong and dangerous neighbours alongside her possessions in any part of the world, so that she has been able to rub along with a small army and leave foreign affairs to look after themselves. But the recent Russian advance has changed all this. A great military power is now a close neighbour to her best market, where, moreover, England has been able to keep 250,000,000 foreign subjects in order by the astonishingly small number of 65,000 bayonets, now to be raised to 75,000. Imagine the 35,000,000 of Great Britain and Ireland kept down by 10,000 French or German soldiers! Yet that is exactly the proportion in India, where seven times the population of the British Isles is ruled by 75,000 British soldiers. England's sway over India is a miracle, and Russians are to be pardoned if they think they can upset it. There is not a Russian statesman or general who does not believe that very little stirring would be needed to cause an Indian rising, and it is well England should face the fact that her own sons in India are not at all sure in their mind about Indian loyalty, although they wisely avoid publicly discussing the subject. To say you suspect a man is to half force him to be a traitor. No one has more vaunted Indian loyalty than Lord Ripon, yet he sanctioned, during his term of office, the erection of refuges and

the organization of a scheme of defence to put the Madras Presidency on its guard against another mutiny. To all except bigoted politicians it must be obvious that among 250,000,000 Orientals, different in every respect from ourselves, there must be some who hate us, or who would like to see a change, or who would accept Russian pay to plot against us. These form what Skobeleff called the "disaffected elements," and these he proposed stirring up, in order to at least prevent our placing many troops on the frontier. It is unquestionably wise that England should generously trust India, but the Russians have moved down upon the country too soon in its career of progress for her to rely solely upon the people against Russia. Let us clear our minds of cant. Our statesmen have kept India for us all along, not because of the *good* we do the country, but on account of the *profit* we get from it.

Russian Attacks on English Trade.

That profit is so great, that it has never angered me that Russia should want to share it. You sometimes hear heedless Englishmen say, "Well, what if we do lose India?—we did without it once, and we could do without it again. Even if the Russians did get into India, they wouldn't hurt us at home." Wouldn't they? Let us look into the matter. Our prosperity, depends, not upon agriculture, but upon trade—trade with our possessions, and countries abroad. Now there is hardly a country in the world that does not impose heavy duties on English goods, and the worst of all is Russia, for she not only sticks a tax on every conceivable article of British commerce, but she absolutely prohibits them entering parts of her empire. For instance, by a law passed in 1882, no English manufactures of any description are allowed to cross the Russian frontier into Central Asia. That is pretty plain war to the knife, and should go dead home to the ranting shopkeeper or working man who doesn't care a rap for the Russian advance on India. Years ago we carried on a great trade with Central Asia; every year

it is fading away. I read in the official *Turkistan Gazette*, only a few months ago, that Russia had successfully destroyed British trade to the extent of £758,000 a year in the province of Bokhara alone. Yet people wonder what causes depression of trade, and pot-house politicians talk of the Russian advance doing no harm to England. A few years ago England used to send across the Caucasus, to the markets of North Persia, goods to the value of several hundred thousand pounds a year. After Russia secured Batoum from Turkey, and finished her railway to the Caspian, she prohibited this free transit, and thereby seized most of the trade for herself. Was that of no concern to England? At present, as I have explained, she aims at getting down to the Persian Gulf. Well, to the Persian markets near the Persian Gulf we send goods to the value of £1,000,000 a year. "Never mind," cry the heedless ones, "Russia needs outlets to the sea; she ought to have the Persian Gulf!!" Outlets to the sea Russia may need, but I defy any man to prove that the Persian Gulf in Persian hands impedes in any way the natural expansion of Russia. The Persians themselves have the first right to the country, and after that we have as much right as Russia; aye, and more so, because as things are now, no harm is done to her, while if she altered them by taking the country, she would turn out our trade, and England would lose another million a year in business. India is as free to Russian goods as to our own, but every move Russia makes in Asia she stamps out English commerce.

The Profit we get from India.

Hence the possibility of Russia, on seizing Herat, attempting to turn us out of India by raising the cry of "Home Rule for India," is not a matter to be lightly scoffed at. "Russia could never conquer India," you sometimes hear people saying. Russia doesn't propose to conquer India. Her present plan is to beat the English army on the frontier, or wherever it may make a stand, and excite the people of India to a mutiny by telling them to expel the foreigner and rule themselves. Then

her first piece of advice would be—"Prohibit all English goods entering India." And why? Because she knows that if successfully carried out, this measure would scourge England with starvation and ruin. "The downfall of British rule in India would mean a revolution in London," once said Skobelev. This was an exaggeration, but it shows that Russians think they can inflict ruin on English homes without troubling to deposit a single soldier on English shores. And, to a certain extent, they are right. For instance, 250,000 English cotton-spinners are engaged all the year round making cotton goods for India. If India were suddenly lost, would not that mean 250,000 people out of work, or, in other words, one-third of Lancashire exposed to starvation? Again, to India, Newcastle and Cardiff send £1,000,000 sterling in coals; Middlesborough, Barrow, Leeds, and other towns £1,500,000 in railway plant; Leeds, Manchester, and Glasgow nearly £2,000,000's worth of machinery; and Sheffield, Birmingham, and other places £6,000,000's worth of metal and metal goods. Every year we send to India £32,000,000's worth of goods; and as it is difficult to fully realise what this means, I shall make it clearer if I say that 3,500 English ships are employed in taking goods to and from India. Imagine those 3,500 ships suddenly rendered idle, and 60,000 sailors deprived of work—would that not mean starvation in most of the English seaports? Then we must not forget that it is thanks to the tea we get from India that tea is so cheap, and that it is largely due to the corn we grow in India that we have such a cheap loaf. If we lost India, not only would hundreds of thousands of people be thrown out of work, but the price of food would rise and fresh bitterness be added to distress.

The Loss of India means Ruin to Rich and Poor.

Nor would the masses be alone affected. England not only carries on trade in India, but she has sunk a vast amount of capital in the country.* Eleven thousand miles of railway have

* For a deeply interesting and instructive account of the value of the Colonies and India, let me recommend to the reader the patriotic little shilling book by

swallowed up £140,000,000. All this would be lost if we were turned out of India. Then Englishmen have established there thousands of tea and coffee plantations; they have built docks, constructed canals, and sunk money in a variety of enterprises, until the total now exceeds £250,000,000 sterling. The interest on this sustains in England thousands of wealthy people, and the money they thus receive and spend "makes good for trade" wherever they reside. Then there are the thousands of English officials in India. Of these, we may say that the generality have no fortune when they go to India, and come back in after years, either with money, or, at any rate, they receive pensions yearly from India. Now the money they bring back must make England richer, and the pensions they spend wherever they settle down must "make it good for trade." If we lost India, not only would the hundreds of thousands of pounds coming from there in pensions every year cease, and involve people "well off" in every town in ruin, but the shopkeepers they give custom to, and the workmen or servants they employ, would suffer largely likewise. Those who have carefully worked out the figures say that, if we lost India, over 600,000 men, at the very least, would be at once thrown out of work; and if we add their wives and little ones, it will be seen that more than 2,500,000 of English people would be exposed to starvation. If we further add to these the capitalists, manufacturers, and merchants ruined, and with them the shopkeepers ruined by loss of custom, the shopmen, clerks, and servants thrown out of service, &c, we shall find that the loss of India would carry destitution or distress to between 4,000,000 and 5,000,000 of English people.

The Folly of disregarding Military Warnings.

So that if the loss of India did not cause a revolution in London, as Skobelev imagined, it would occasion a condition of

Professor Cyril Ransome, published by Cassell & Co., entitled *Our Colonies and India: How we got them and why we keep them.*

things not far removed from it. At any rate, I think I have shown that India is worth keeping, and what is worth keeping is worth guarding. And who are the best judges of guarding India but your Indian generals? And if they all concur that Candahar must be India's Metz, and Herat be never allowed to fall to Russia, ought not all England give heed to them? If India were attacked by Russia to-morrow, would you not have to do in Afghanistan all that Sir Frederick Roberts and other Indian generals told you to do, and spend at their bidding your millions without questioning their plans? If that be so, why refuse to listen to them *to-day*? What they say is plain and to the point. Safeguard Herat at any cost, and let India form a Plevna at Candahar. This will not save India from attack, but it will protect her from something worse—a Russian *surprise*. If England leaves Candahar unguarded too long, she may not only lose Herat, but also the Helmund outposts that are essential to the security of Candahar, and without which our Indian Metz would be a broken barrier.

The Afghans misunderstood.

Against our taking a fuller share in the defence of Herat and Candahar the Afghans would raise no obstacle. It is an old woman's fancy that the Afghans are a nation of fanatic savages, who will attack any foreigner entering their country. Years ago Englishmen wandered freely among them, and for months now the officers of the Lumsden Mission have been living close to Herat, and even in it, and no one has displayed the slightest hatred. Why, the very Cabul and Herat soldiers who fought against us in the last war have been the first to shake hands with the British officers, and have gone out of their way to do acts of civility and kindness which show that their good feeling is not a forced one, ordered by the Ameer. We have regiments of Afghans in our service, and scores of Afghan officials who have served us faithfully for years. At Candahar and Herat, in both of which cities, remember, the Cabul Afghan is as much an

intruder as ourselves, there is no reason why we should not establish the closest relations with the people, and help them defend themselves against Russia. Cabul and the fierce hill-tribes of the Hindoo Koosh can, for the moment, be left to themselves. It is the highway from the Russian outposts at Pénjdeh to our own at Quetta that we must block and bar.

Utterly impossible to trust Russia.

"It will be well if you send an able emissary, possessing the tongue of a serpent and full of deceit, to the enemy's country, so that he may with *sweet words perplex the enemy's mind*, and induce him to give up the intention of fighting with you." These words were written in 1878 by General Stolietoff, the Russian Envoy at Cabul, to the Afghans. A short time ago we had Lessar in England. He was full of "sweet words," and declared that what had been written about Russian designs was false, and that Russia wanted nothing beyond the frontier he claimed. This frontier, with the exception of Zulfikar, which point he admits is valueless, has been granted to Russia; and he hardly returns home with the treaty, when he laughingly declares that he has "hoodwinked" England, and that the new frontier will last no longer than previous ones! After this, who are we to believe—the Russians, like Lessar, who profess to be frank, friendly, and honest, or the Russian generals like Skobelev, Kaufmann, and Tohernayeff, who tell us plainly Russia means to try and turn us out of India the moment she gets close enough. In our midst are certain howling dervishes of Englishmen, ever ready to go spinning about the country, proclaiming the good intentions of Russia. "Simply yield Constantinople," they say, "and Russia will cease her advances upon India." To this I reply that Constantinople has in Russian minds a very expansive meaning. It means all Asia Minor, and a whole series of naval stations in the Mediterranean close to the Suez Canal. Only very simple-minded men, ignorant of history, can imagine that if Russia secured Constantinople, she would never want to grow

any larger, or annex another inch of territory outside the new frontier. Constantinople is not the only place coveted by Russia. She wants Corea, she wants various districts of Northern China, she wants to control Persia and get to the Persian Gulf, and she wants Asia Minor and the Levant. The trade which we transact with those countries gives us a right to protest against their annexation, and there is no doubt that we shall always protest. Then let us bear in mind what General Soboleff says about the power Russia will secure after annexing Herat. "Whenever England attempts to oppose us in any part of the world," he says, "we can force her to become an ally, under the threat of attacking India." He does not specify Constantinople, but the whole universe. In other words, he says, let Russia get within close bullying-distance of India, and England will always have to knuckle down, or embark on a war with the odds against her.

Corn may cause a War as well as Constantinople.

But the lust of territory is not the only cause of war between nations. England is a very rich nation; Russia a very poor one. Of late years trade has been getting worse in Russia, in spite of seizing the markets of Central Asia, and the debt of the country is annually increasing. Now, this condition of things is to a certain extent due to ourselves. Russia's principal exports used to be corn, tallow, hides, hemp, wool, seed, and a variety of other agricultural products. Every one of these we have spoilt through introducing to Europe similar products from India and our Colonies. Australian fat has injured Russian tallow, Indian jute has ruined Russian hemp; hides, wool, and seed, from our various Colonies, have given a heavy blow to those articles in Russia, and, to cap it, we have brought distress to thousands of Russian peasants, and lowered the revenue receipts, by making India the competitor of Russia in the wheat markets of Europe. Only a few years ago nobody thought India capable of exporting corn. Last year England received

10,000,000 cwts. of wheat from India; and France, Italy, and other countries were also large importers. The loss this has inflicted on the Russian corn trade has provoked great anger in Russia, and already the cry has been raised: "If England, thanks to starving and grinding down the people of India, is going to ruin our corn trade by flooding Europe with her cheap Indian wheat, we shall be compelled, for the salvation of Russia, to turn her out of India!" I ascribe very great danger to this cry. The Russian Government can afford to wait for Constantinople—that is simply a matter of political and military glory; but if trade and finance get worse in Russia, there is a fear that the Government may seek to extricate itself from difficulties by a descent upon India. "It is a comfort to think," said a Russian newspaper during the recent war-scare, "that once we get Herat we shall be able to exact, whenever we like, a huge war indemnity from the English. We might even make them pay off all our Public Debt for us." And having exacted an indemnity, Russia might try next to secure the trade of India. If India is such a good market for England, can one wonder at needy Russia longing for it? "England has bled India long enough," is a remark often heard in Russia; "it is time Russia had a turn."

Impossible to make a Solid Peace with Russia.

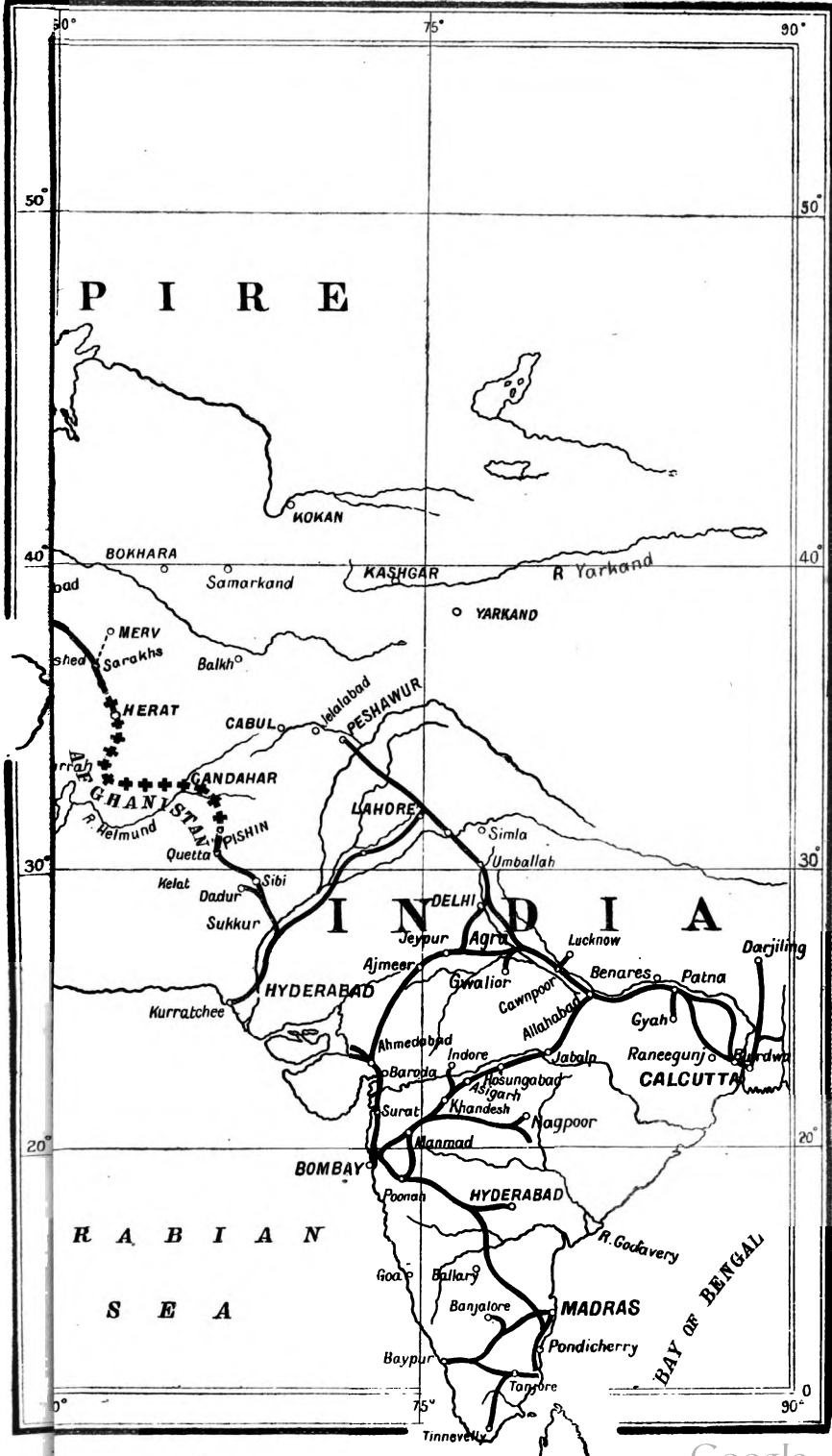
Thus it is not simply the desire to possess Constantinople that may excite Russia to warlike acts, and, therefore, we cannot buy her goodwill by allowing her to take the Sultan's capital. Besides, what is the guarantee Russia could give us that she would always be friends, and never meddle with our interests any more? She never has respected treaties, and the disregard of Russians for "sacred covenants" and promises is so proverbial, even among themselves, that there is no compact she could make which would be worth the paper on which it was written. Therefore, whether we like it or not, we are compelled to disregard mere treaties and assurances, and rely for the de-

fence of India upon British bayonets. Since those bayonets are so few, compared with the Russian Berdans, we must make up for the deficiency by giving our soldiers the best breastwork our strategists can find on the north-west Indian border. That breastwork, they agree, is Candahar and the river Helmund. Our present one, both the late Gladstone Government and the existing Salisbury Cabinet represent as inadequate. If that be so, since Russia is pushing on her railway to Herat as fast as she can, working even by torchlight, the sooner we get into the right quarters and establish our Metz the better. No great stronghold can be created at a moment's notice. A Metz made in a hurry may be lost in a hurry, and we must never forget that the loss of the Candahar position may mean the loss of India. Moreover, once we are back at Candahar, Herat will be no longer isolated, and the construction of a railway would tie it permanently to the fortunes of India.

The Duty of One and All.

To sum up. The loss of India means starvation, distress, and ruin to four or five millions of English people, and therefore it is our sacred duty to safeguard it as thoroughly as any part of the British Isles. The Indus river and the Sulieman range having been demonstrated by geographical discoveries to constitute no effective safeguard, and English statesmen and generals having declared our present position only a temporary one, England ought to take up a permanent line of defence as speedily as circumstances will allow. That permanent line of defence is the Candahar district stretching to the river Helmund. This she ought to strongly fortify in good time, because Russia makes no secret of her intentions to advance again before long into Afghanistan, and to attack India if opposed. The fortifications ought to be of the most powerful character, because by the completion of her railway system from St. Petersburg to Penjdeh next year, Russia will be able to invade Afghanistan with overwhelming forces. In view of the enormous power of

attack that railway will give her, we ought to resort to every possible measure to safeguard the Key of India. Herat must be saved at any cost, to prevent Russia being able in time of peace to assemble an army of 100,000 to 250,000 troops on its great camping-ground, within a few marches of our troops guarding India. To save it, English diplomacy must remind Russia frequently that any attempt to infringe the new frontier will be a cause of war, and there must be no stint to the defensive preparations in India. As English diplomacy will be weak unless firmly backed up by public opinion, and Ministers of either party at home will hesitate to sanction adequate measures in India if the people of England are indifferent, it is the duty of every Englishman to display an interest in India, and a determination to have it properly safeguarded by whatever statesmen may be in office. To fulfil that duty, every Englishman can do something, either by sustaining with avowed sympathy the military guardians of India, or by sending to Parliament politicians pledged to make the defence of India a primary object of Imperial politics, or by combating personally by tongue, pen, or purse, the unpatriotic and dangerous doctrines of the "Perish India" fanatics. Our forefathers have bequeathed to us a grand Empire in the East, which is becoming yearly more and more the key-stone of England's prosperity. If other hearts grow cold, let you and me at least strive to do our duty, and hand down to our children that empire, intact and ennobled, preserving them as our forefathers preserved us, from the shame of being false to the glorious traditions of Old England.



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